



Dear Senator,

We, the undersigned, represent a broad coalition of those directly involved in public education – from county superintendents to rank and file employees. We are united in our desire to provide the best education possible for our students and to help them succeed.

To advocate what is best for children, we stand united on the items listed below.

We encourage passage of the 5% salary increase for education employees. Every child, regardless of their zip code, deserves to have a highly-skilled, qualified educator working with them. Statewide our salaries are inadequate, and we must do all we can to retain our current employees and recruit new ones to the profession.

We support the additional contribution of \$150 million to PEIA. Employee health care is an important part of the total compensation package of employees and must be addressed. Employees deserve a stable, secure health care benefit without being burdened with a disproportionate share of the costs.

We support the governor's proposal to allow employees to bank their sick leave days and use them for credit upon retirement. With a shortage of educators and substitutes, we need to do all we can to ensure our students have highly qualified educators working with them and to encourage employees to conserve their sick days. Restoring the option to bank their days for credit upon retirement is a wise move.

In addition to the items that we support, we are also united in our opposition to an omnibus education bill being moved through the Legislature this session. We have been advised of the desire to run a bill that links salary increases and PEIA to other reform measures wanted by legislative leadership in a single bill. We are adamantly opposed to such a tactic.

Education employees, as well as the public, deserve an open and transparent path to proposals becoming law. We believe unrelated items should be voted on separately and they should pass or fail based on their own merits. We also believe coupling unrelated items into a single bill violates the "single object" provision of the constitution, thereby effectively killing the bill.

As leaders of the education community we are working in a united effort to achieve what's best for our children and our public schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration in these matters.

Sincerely,

Fred Albert

President
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